

subject matter of claim 21 allowable. Applicants have included matter from now-canceled withdrawn claim 34.

Subject to issuance of a notice of allowability for claims 21-25 and 33, 36, applicant provisionally cancels all the withdrawn claims.

If the claims are allowed, applicant suggests that Fig. 21A be used for the cover page of the application.

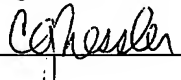
For the examiner's information, the parent application Serial No. 09/187,376, filed November 6, 1998 has resulted in U.S. Patent No. 6,331,222.

Respectfully submitted,  
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By \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Specification Paragraphs Showing Where Changes Have Been Made - October 6, 2004**

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In further accord with the invention, when overlapped sheets are clamped within the apparatus, the sheets are slit, to thereby create a precise butt line. The slitting creates ~~time~~ two trim pieces. Removal of one trim piece, to expose the butt line of the sheets is facilitated by the way in which the top clamps the sheet onto the base. The top has two resilient strips, one on each side of the butt line, which press on the sheets to hold them in place. One of the strips has a low coefficient of friction with the sheet. Thus, one of the sheet trim pieces, the one which overlies the mating sheet, can be pulled from the clamp without release of the clamp.

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Patent Application Serial No. 09/187,376, filed November 6, 1998, now U.S. Patent No. 6,331,222(~~Atty. No. 9834~~), entitled "Splicer for Joining Thin Sheets" describes various aspects of the present invention which are treated here in somewhat less detail. Accordingly, the description of the prior application is hereby incorporated by reference. The use of a splicer in connection with a conveyor device for fanfold sheet is described in related patent application Serial No. 09/187,077, entitled "Fanfold Sheet Feeder Having Stack Postioner," now U.S. Patent No. 6,142,288, having certain common inventorship and assignee herewith; and, the description thereof is hereby incorporated by reference.

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In operation, sheet is first captured within the splicer, before taping, by laying it onto the base and manually closing the top. There are two different modes in which the sheet is positioned or aligned accurately within the splicer, to get the desired precision of joining. As~~as~~ a reference point, the ends, or header and footer, of the sheets might simply be butted together carefully by an operator using visual observation. The usual aim is to both get minimal gap or accurate sheet-edge perforated hole spacing (as the case may be) and to get accurate spacing and orientation in the x-y plane, so there is no bend in the spliced sheet and so that the parting line to parting line spacing for fanfold sheet is maintained. Sometimes, a perforated tape is used, and the perforation of the laid-down tape must be consistent with the foregoing aims.